

Building a speakers bureau the ReconsiDer way.... by Mike Smithson, ReconsiDer

The information provided here is the product of my work and education since the summer of '98. Since the beginning of the ReconsiDer speakers bureau, we've made over 500 presentations to over 20,000 people (as of May 30th, 2001) across NY. Bookings are now very easy and only delayed by my own logistical restrictions. I believe old-style public speaking coupled with the internet will advance the movement faster than any grass roots effort in the history of this country. The drug war will end, and it will end in our lifetimes.

Focus on a Plan

Robert Raisch, an atty in San Francisco, explained to me that any grassroots effort must use a military-type attitude about the goal to be obtained. He lists 3 topics for consideration:

1. Strategy
2. Tactics
3. Logistics

Before beginning your speakers bureau, consider these topics carefully. What is your goal? How will you implement that goal? What is your strategy? What tactics will you use? And, what will you use to accomplish your strategy? Bob's brilliant but simple analysis put a lot into focus for me and the speakers bureau grew because of his presentation.

Getting Started: Materials

When I started out in '98, it wasn't like this. I had to develop a phone pitch, a stationary page, bios for the speakers, make return mailing labels...we had nothing. I've enclosed files of the items you'll need to run a speakers bureau. I have included:

- our stationary for a reference
- a generic letter to a Rotary-it's been very successful for me
- my phone pitch
- a quotes page by people who've heard our speakers-get their approval!
- The speakers bios
- Sign up forms- we invite people to register for a free quarterly
- An evaluation form for post presentation critiques
- A typical press release
- Mission statement and overview of ReconsiDer
- A confirmation letter I send. This is a must. Confirm the engagement!

Okay...let's get started.

1. **Stationary.** Start with a name of your org, a font, maybe one line for a slogan-remember: think marketing!...and use that with all of your correspondence. A line at the bottom could include contact information. At ReconsiDer, we have 2 types of stationary: a page with the logo across the top and another that includes our "advisory board" along the left column.
2. **Generic Intro Letter:** You want to end the Drug War. You'll need an intro letter to send to groups telling them about your org. Write the letter telling them a bit about your group, your efforts, why you're doing what you're doing and what you have to offer to them. Tying it to a local issue or state issue helps. Keep it to one page or it won't get read. Finish with a challenge or an offer and contact info.
3. **Phone Pitch.** This phone pitch is the product of thousands of calls. You are probably dreading making these calls. Hell, what am I doing, selling insurance? Well, get over it. These aren't typical cold calls anyway. You are calling a group that has a program at their meetings and WANTS you to call. They want to hear from us. So, it's not like selling long distance service or

house siding, you are giving them something they want. So, write yourself an opening line, be prepared to answer a few questions, have a calendar ready, practice and start dialing.

4. **Quotes Page.** People will enjoy your message and your speakers. Follow up on speaking engagements, find out what they thought and quote them. Keep those quotes and bring them out occasionally to show a skeptic. You'll win this person over. It's good for the media, too.
5. **Biographies.** As speakers come on board, prepare bio's of them. Keep it to one page. Have a title for them, a header which explains their individual message, a history and accolades of the speaker and, if avail, quotes about him by people who've heard his presentation or can comment on his reputation.
6. **Sign-Up Forms.** Have a clipboard at the presentations for your listeners to sign up to receive info about your topic. This is a less intrusive way to reach people when they're not ready to commit.
7. **Evaluation Form.** Not used often, but in certain settings, they provide you with needed feedback. I use them at forums, college presentations, and conferences.
8. **Press Release.** Press releases have a uniqueness all of their own. Media outlets get dozens of them everyday. You need yours to stand out. Keep it to one page. Contact info in bold across the top. The title of the event you are promoting, a brief description of it and then a report of the speaker and why this is newsworthy and worth reporting. Oh, and follow-up! Send your press release to the media, but it won't get much action unless you call the people you've sent the press release to and reminded them about the press release!
9. **Mission Statement.** The bane of the 90s. Everyone's got one. Hell, even my organizer says I should have a 'Personal' mission statement. Unfortunately, everyone wants them from you. Make it 2 paragraphs, describe the org: who and what are you and why you have formed...this will give the org you are contacting a taste of what you are doing and bringing to them.
10. **Confirmation Letter.** This doesn't go out every time, but some type of confirmation must be done for every gig. I say again: EVERY GIG! On at least 6 occasions in the past 3 years, there has been a mistake made, a forgotten discussion, a lost piece of paper. It's very embarrassing to arrive and be the second speaker when one is expected. Confirm the gig.

Start off by being organized. You need a calendar with large spaces to write material into. Get a fax machine. Be prepared to fax upon ending every call. Have stamps, envelopes and labels ready. Have files ready. Record all media contacts. For the local area, record all of your media contacts and fax numbers. Find out who the assignment editors are. After you've done these things, you are ready to start. Do you have a few hundred dollars? To begin, even in the local area, you need funds to pay for the printing, the fax, the long distant phone calls, the mailings. Envelopes and printer ink cartridges, etc. Don't forget to have business cards made up for yourself. Consider getting a state tax-exempt # so you can sell bumper stickers, t-shirts and books at events and conferences. Distribute copies of these tax-exempt forms to people you buy material from (like Office Max or Staples).

The Next Level, Part I: Speakers

When you're ready to get engagements, hear your speakers first, critique them, ask them questions that will probably come from the audience. Keep the presentation to 20 minutes. Spend 3-5 minutes on self, 3-5 on the org and the balance on the issue. Then close with a challenge by the speaker for the listeners to do something. Then, ask for questions. People hate it when you go long. These people usually need to be somewhere!

Part II: Organizations to call on.

Go on the web for people to call. Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis have national sites with people to call. The National Exchange Club is another. Here's more:

- NAACP
- National Org of Women

- League of Women Voters
- Zonta
- Lions
- Elks
- Political Groups
- Masons
- Doctors Associations
- Church organizations
- Optimists
- Attorney associations
- Neighborhood Watch groups
- DAR
- People who work in corrections
- College organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Veterans organizations
- Unions

Putting it all Together

You have your material, your speakers, your contact info. You're ready to go. Find a quiet spot, begin in the morning and start making calls. For each organizational group, you should have a sheet of papers dedicated to them. All of the groups should be listed, preferably in alphabetical order by towns. You should have another sheet with the days of the week across the top and three columns top to bottom showing breakfast lunch and dinner. List each group in the column where they belong. For instance, by looking at the Rotary web site in District 7230, I know the Lincoln Rotary meets at noon on Wednesday. As I build a tour, I may have gigs scheduled for Tues and Thurs, and a dinner on Wed. I'll return to my meetings page to see who meets on Wed at noon. I'll see that one of them is the Lincoln Rotary so I turn to the contact page, look up the number and give them a call. It simplifies everything instead of going through all of the pages to see who meets at noon on Wed.

You call an organization and you book the engagement. You'll need the following information:

- Name of the organization.
- Where they meet; the exact address and when they meet.
- A contact name and phone #. Fax # and email address, too, if they have them.
- The probable number of people who will attend.

In return, you will give them:

- Speakers name and "last minute" contact info. If my speaker has a cell phone or beeper, I give the organization this number in case of a last minute cancellation or if the speaker hasn't shown up by 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting, I ask them to call the speaker directly just in case he is lost.
- Your contact info: name, phone and fax #, email.
- Fax, mail or email bio, statement page with cover letter.
- You will also tell them you will contact them about 10 days before the event to confirm the engagement. You may ask if they have any media contacts or if they would mind if someone from the media attends and reports on the presentation. I do this occasionally if I have a media contact that wants to see and report about the presentation.

I write down all of the info I've been given, plus any info about VIPs my speaker should know about.

Later, I will send all of this info to the speaker and if and when I send info to the organization, I will note

that also. If your organization has a web site, you can update your schedule with the engagement you booked.

Specialty bookings

These bookings include paying gigs to conferences, colleges and conventions. They are handled in a similar manner, except your organization is being paid for the presentation. This adds complexity. Most speakers will expect part of that fee for themselves; after all, they're doing the work. I suggest you have a contract on file between your organization and the speaker outlining the distribution of the money received from the client. Some groups give the speaker 50%, other speakers bureaus charge 15% for their services. You will probably want to show the speaker as a "contract" employee for IRS purposes, so you'll need a date of birth and a social security number. I think the IRS form is a '1099'. Every speaking engagement involves set-up costs: phone calls, printing, etc, so subtract that from the gross before determining the fee to be paid to the speaker. Most colleges will pay a fee for the speaker, plus expenses like car rental, gas, meals and hotel accommodations.

The client. I've attached a sample contract for you to use with the client. It's important to outline specifically what will be expected of your organization and the speaker. Determine time needed for the engagement and any additional requirements. Determine cancellation fees to protect your organization. Determine a fee payment schedule.

Colleges offer options not available from a typical civic group. You can promote a debate for the college, or a panel of like minded experts or experts with opposing viewpoints. You still must go through all of the previous requirements, but in addition, you'll want to work with the college on press interviews and press releases. Most colleges have a radio station or a newspaper and these provide an easy press opportunity. Also, the presentation by your speaker provides an opportunity to have a table or display at the event. Working with the SSDP, you may help in establishing an SSDP chapter at the college.

Okay, I've rattled on enough. I like to hear myself talk. If there's anything I can leave you with, it's the notion that this WORKS. Public presentations are the BEST way of converting folks. It gives them a chance to see how their neighbors think, how their business associates think. They get to hear the passion presented by the speaker. This works. The best time to reach me is between 3-9 pm everyday. I work straight days.

Mike Smithson, director
ReconsiDer speakers bureau
(315) 488-3630
<http://www.reconsider.org> speakers@reconsider.org

SAMPLE BUDGET

Speakers Bureau Budget-1st quarter, 2000

Mike Smithson, director

Funds for the 1st quarter will be directed to the growth of paid presentations along with speaking tours in key state legislative districts. These two areas will be part of a year-long strategy. On the first issue, ReconsiDer will follow through on a membership to the National Association of Campus Activities. I attended a regional conference in November to find out how the association between companies and colleges works. Because of the potential for many paid presentations through the colleges, I want ReconsiDer to attend the National Convention of NACA in Boston, MA. on Feb. 16th. This is a large outlay of funds but the potential far outweighs the cost. At this convention, over 550 colleges and 2000 delegates from around the country will attend to view music and comedy acts and lecturers. According to the NACA National office and the New England Region, there is no one making presentations about Drug Policy. The second area involves a directed approach by our speakers in districts represented by powerful state legislator and Syracuse. I plan an intensive effort to book speakers into colleges with the presentation targeted on Black History Month. Finally, we plan to make our first foray into NYC from Feb. 28th to March 10th.

NACA Conference:

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Exhibit booth fee | \$350 |
| Hotel and meal | 750 |
| Slide show (HR95) | 250 |
| Materials for handouts | 200 |
| Tolls, gas | 50 |
| Day pass for speaker | 300 |
| Banners for booth | <u>300</u> |

TOTAL: \$2200

Additional operations:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|
| Hotels (15 nights at aprox. \$50 per night) | \$750 |
| Car rentals (25 days at \$30 per day) | 750 |
| Gasoline, tolls | 200 |
| Mailings and postage | 100 |
| Office supplies | 150 |
| Phone service (488-2877) | 220 |
| Long distance service | 200 |
| Additional HR95 displays | <u>400</u> |

TOTAL: \$2770

Total expenses \$4970

Expected receipts:

| | | |
|------------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| Clarkson University | \$540 | (1350-total fee) |
| 10 dates at \$400 each | 4000 | (10,000-total expected fees) |

1st quarter net expenses \$430

Clarkson is scheduled. I plan on booking Cliff Thornton heavily during Feb. at colleges for Black History Month at \$1000 per event. The breakdown of the pay out is:

50% to the speaker 10% to the speakers bureau director, 40% to ReconsiDer.

Sincerely,

Mike Smithson, director ReconsiDer speakers bureau

Groups To Contact

Getting the word to others...

ReconsiDer speakers bureau: (315) 488-3630 or speakers@reconsider.org

You've heard about alternatives to the War on Drugs. Shouldn't this information be made available to more people? Who would you suggest?

Consider the following clubs or groups. Think about it, then contact the ReconsiDer speakers bureau. The more people hear these presentations, the sooner the War will end.

Suggested groups:

Rotary

Elks

Moose

Social science clubs

NAACP

Chambers of Commerce

Political groups

NOW

Exchange Club

PTA/PTO

Kiwanis

Masons

Fraternity and Sorority

Church organizations

Hispanic groups

Attorneys

Sierra Club

Native Americans

Optimists

Teachers unions

Name of organization or contact:

Phone number/address/email:

Can we say how we acquired their name?

Sample Letter

Dr. Charles Kohout
Clarence Rotary

Dear Dr. Kohout,

04 May, 2000

My name is Mike Smithson and I'm the director of the speakers bureau for ReconsiDer: Forum on Drug Policy. As I stated last night, I provide speakers to groups, usually for no fee, to explain our beliefs about the War on Drugs. ReconsiDer is a New York statewide, grassroots group of over 500 people in 5 chapters which believes the Drug War has failed. After 30 years of attempts by the government to rid our country of illicit drugs, we now have 2 million people in prison. We have more law enforcement personnel than any time in our history, and drug use by our young is still amongst the highest in the world. How do we solve this ever-growing problem? More police? Military interdiction? Stricter sentencing for drug offenders?

Frankly, ReconsiDer says NO. By continuing the same policy year after year with the same results we should be able to say the policy works. Our current drug policies do not. We believe America should end its Drug War, change its laws and work towards a new policy. Among our members, we have many experts on the Drug War, including law enforcement, federal judges, lawyers, doctors and teachers. These experts speak to organizations like yours everyday to rebut the rhetoric of government propaganda. For instance, here in New York, politicians of both parties feel that to show a "get tough on crime" policy, they endorse minimum sentencing laws for 1st and 2nd time drug offenders. It may sound good at first, but look around: in 1973, New York had 13,000 felons behind bars. Now we have 74,000. Indeed, a third are in prison because of the Rockefeller Drug Laws, not because they are violent offenders. Disregarding for the moment the inhumanity of the policy, what about the cost of such a policy in pure financial terms?

Our main spokesperson is Peter Christ, a retired Town of Tonawanda Police captain. Peter is eloquent and experienced in the Drug War, having seen it from a perspective few of us understands. Peter is also a dynamic speaker with just the right amount of humor and is always asked to come back.

Peter will be in Western NY during June and early July. I hope you'll take advantage of our offer for a presentation to your club. If you'd like to hear more about us, please contact me at: (315) 488-3630, or the Internet: speakers@reconsider.org. Our web site can be a valuable source of information, too, at <http://reconsider.org>. We believe this issue is the most important topic in America.

Sincerely,

Mike Smithson, Director, ReconsiDer speakers bureau
131 Flint Path, Syracuse NY 13219-3403 (315) 488-2877

Phone Pitch

Before you begin, you must be prepared. You can't just pick up the phone and start talking. Have your pitch prepared, have paper, a calendar, and be ready for questions. Have stock answers ready for these questions. Keep them short, however; you don't want to steal the speaker's thunder. Finally, have a short pitch for answering machines or voice mail ready. Expect this situation about half of the time. Next, say these things to yourself before you start:

- 1) I believe in the product. The Drug War has failed. The product is the message.
- 2) I believe in the delivery. The speaker is merely the vehicle to deliver the product.

Okay, let's get started...

Hello, my name is Mike Smithson. (If you know who you're calling, ask to speak to him/her. For simplistic purposes, I will refer to the person I'm calling as 'him'. Sorry, I didn't go to PC school.)

Hello, Mr. Jones, I'm Mike Smithson and I'm with ReconsiDer. We'd like to provide a speaker for an upcoming meeting of the Canton Rotary club.

What is ReconsiDer? Well, we're a New York statewide grassroots organization of over 400 people in 4 chapters. Putting it simply, we believe the Drug War has failed and that New York and America must "reconsider" our drug policies.

(By now, your presentation is at its 2nd fork. The 1st fork was whether or not you reached Mr. Jones! Either Mr. Jones interjects, or he continues to listen. I give him 1 second. Then I continue.)

For instance, take our prison system. ReconsiDer believes drug use is a public health problem, not a criminal justice problem. In 1973, New York passed the Rockefeller Drug Laws, minimum mandatory sentencing laws which helped balloon our prison population from 12,500 to over 72,000 today. Nationally, we're putting 1500 people in prison each week. The majority of these are for drug related offenses. Is drug use down? No, of course not.

(Mr. Jones will probably say something by now, and here's where you set the hook. He will either respond in one of 3 ways:

- 1) Humanitarian. He's going to talk about people getting thrown in prison and for what? Smoking a little dope. Respond in a humane fashion. Talk about the kids and families effected by this Draconian set of penalties.
- 2) Fiscal or budgetary. He's going to say what good it does to spend \$30k per year just to jail a guy for smoking a little dope. "Prisons weren't made for these type of offenses", I say. I have a fact to throw at him, like how the cost of the prison system has gone up, and unfortunately, the state funds to colleges has gone down. Did you know tuition at a SUNY school has gone up 29% in the last 7 years? The money for the correctional system has gone up over 35% in the same time period? Did you know

NY has built 70 prisons over the past 20 years? I don't know about you, but I'd rather have my neighbor graduating from SUNY than an upstate prison.

3) He'll be adversarial. Do you guys believe in legalization? Or: sure, prisons are where the drug dealers belong. Or: What's your alternative?

Mr. Smith, ReconsiDer does not endorse any of the alternatives. Our efforts are to stop the current policy, and start the debate. The US has a zero tolerance policy, a "drug-free America policy". That will never work. We will never be drug-free, just as no society in the history of the world ever been drug-free. We need to deal with drug abuse as a public health problem. Is every user an abuser? Of course not. If that were the case, than the beer I had last night when I got home from work would make me an alcoholic. I'm not an alcoholic. (I also may appeal to his Rotary status): Mr. Jones, we like to speak to Rotaries because, well, frankly, yours is an international organization. You are exposed to people from other countries more than the common man is. You sponsor foreign exchange students and I'm sure comparisons are made between America and the other countries' policies. Take, for example, Holland. Marijuana is not a legal substance, but it's treated as one, in specific circumstances. Now, isn't it interesting to note that Holland has a lower percentage of illicit drug use by teens than America? They also have a lower crime rate and a much lower murder rate. Is marijuana legalization an option? Considering those facts I've just related, I'd say sure, we need to look at it.

(Mr. Jones will either respond or hesitate...about a 50/50 chance, I think. If he hesitates, I'm in with the speaker...) We have many experts to speak about the failed Drug War. For example, there's Peter Christ, a retired police captain from the Town of Tonawanda. He's brilliant, passionate and funny, too. Peter is always asked to return. He's well received by Rotaries. (I would say the exact same things about all of our speakers)

The pitch, in most cases, is over. Mr. Jones may: 1) want to continue the discussion and debate a while longer, 2) give you the name of his program chairman, 3) ask you to send him some information, 4) book your speaker, 5) tell you he'll think about it, or 6) say no thanks, we're all booked up. Oh really? We're booking presentations into October (or any month about 6 months from now) Is your schedule that filled? He's caught now, and he has to give in to asking you for info or one of the other options. By the way: Don't offer to send info; let them ask you. Everyone is on a budget, especially us. I suggest you get a fax machine. They sell for as low as \$120 and they can work with an answering machine. If this person wants something, get the fax number and send it out ASAP. Most people you're calling have faxes.

As for the booking of the presentation. Here's what you MUST get: the date and time. Yeah, sounds stupid, but get the exact time the speaker has to be there. If it's a mealtime, than ask if a meal is involved. It always is for Rotary, and they always have you as a guest. How long will they expect a speaker to talk? Rotaries typically allow for a 20-minute presentation. Plan for Q/A. Where is the engagement? Get the exact address, then directions. Then ask if you can bring another member of your organization. Why? To keep the speaker to a time limit and also to answer questions when the presentation is over. They always say yes. Can I notify the press? Can the public come to the presentation of the meeting only? Who is the contact person for the Rotary? If there is any changes or questions, Mr. Jones, please call ME about the speaker. I will be your contact person for ReconsiDer and Peter Christ.

After all this is done, I repeat it all back to him.

Thanks, and we're looking forward to speaking to the Canton Rotary.

You're not done.

Notes. If I never reached Mr. Jones, my notes under Canton Rotary say: 4/4, JS: N/A. This means "April 4th, Jake Smith, no answer". LM is "left message". Design your own note system, but keep notes. Later, you'll come back and see how many times you've called and whom you've called. Some of you will find this unnecessary, however, I'm calling 30-40 people per week and there's no way I'll ever be able to remember everything they said. I'll also include interesting antidotes or names dropped by Mr. Smith. For example, a recent call resulted in me finding out the person knew the DA and said the DA told him the state had "cut him off"...told him he was over his quota and to stop sending people to prison from that county. This is information to keep track of. The speaker's got to be told this stuff.

I always call a few days before the event to confirm the time and date.

After the event, I make a follow-up call to see how it went. The Rotaries always print a weekly newsletter which talk about the previous week. Ask them for a copy of this, which will mention your speaker. This, if written well, can be used for future Rotaries or other organizations when they ask you for references. Finally, mention the availability of other speakers of diverse backgrounds. The Drug War effects a lot in our lives. Whenever you're interested, we have a (fill in the blank with doctor, lawyer, economist, etc) to make a presentation. The topic will be similar, but it will talk about a totally different aspect of the Drug War.

I'd set up files for each Rotary district...separate files for NAACP, Churches, PTAs, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, drug counselors, ABA, and others as they build. If the space is available, put a 6 month calendar on the wall. Each date should have a box large enough to fill in the organization we're speaking to, who's speaking, time, then the following lines underneath: Press? Public? Assistant? These last 3 are for: is the press allowed? Can the public attend? Can an assistant come? A simple Y or N will suffice. Looking at this calendar, as it builds, will show where work needs done. If I'm using a dry marker board, on Feb 1st, I erase January, replace it with July, and as the months close out, I'm marching across the calendar filling in new months. Do you see it in your mind?

Finally, I've only addressed the Rotary club in this presentation. Customize the presentation to fit the organization you're calling. If I'm calling a church, I speak more on the humanity side. I appeal to the minister's profession. If I'm speaking to an NAACP member, I'm speaking about the racism of the Drug War. Some will call this pandering. I think it's salesmanship.

That's enough for now. Any Qs, please call.

Sample Confirmation

**RECONSIDER:
forum on drug policy**

The War on Drugs has failed;
We must make peace, heal our wounds, and change our laws.

131 Flint Path

N.Y. 13219

Syracuse,

(315)488-3630 voice or fax

Date:

To:

Ms./Mr./Mrs.,

This is a confirmation of the speaking engagement by _____,
to the

_____ . I have him/ her scheduled to speak
at _____ on

_____ at the _____.
If

there are any questions or conflicts, please contact me as soon as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mike Smithson
Director of Speakers Bureau

Please mail or fax directions _____

Speakers bios enclosed as requested _____

Presentation Contract

Contract Date _____

ReconsiDer presentation to _____ on _____.

ReconsiDer agrees to provide _____ for

_____ on _____ beginning at _____. ReconsiDer agrees to provide speaker(s) for pre and post-event interviews. Travel costs for the speakers will be included in the presentation fee, unless otherwise specified.

_____ agrees to provide an area for ReconsiDer to display materials at the presentation/debate arena.

_____ agrees to a fee of _____ with

50% due upon signing of agreement and balance due _____.

Cancellation policy:

Prior to 45 days of event, a fee of 20% will be charged for cancellation by either party. From 44 days to 21 days a fee of 35% will be charged and between 20 and 11 days a fee of 50% will be charged to either party. Thereafter, full payment to be made.

Mike Smithson, director
ReconsiDer speakers bureau

Make checks payable and send to: ReconsiDer, 205 Onondaga Ave. Syr NY 13207. ReconsiDer: Forum on Drug Policy is a non-profit organization, IRS tax ID number: 16-1552605.

ReconsiDer speakers bureau: 131 Flint Path Syracuse NY 13219
<http://www.reconsider.org> speakers@reconsider.org (315) 488-2877

Presentation Evaluation

Date and Place _____

Discussion Topic _____

Speaker(s) _____

- 1) What basic message did you hear today that you could use tomorrow?

- 2) What was left out? Did the speakers evade any questions or not fully respond?

- 3) Are you in favor of ending drug prohibition and establishing a controlled and regulated market?

- 4) Did anything you heard today change your opinion about the War on Drugs?

- 5) Do you know of other groups or organizations which would benefit from this discussion?

- 6) Would you like to see a continued discussion about this topic?

- 7) Comments about the production...seating, sound, comfort of the site, time...

ReconsiDer: Forum on Drug Policy began in Syracuse, New York, in 1992. Its members are unified by the conviction that the War on Drugs has failed, and that the drug policy of the United States must substantially change.

We seek to effect this change by a combination of educational and grassroots political organization. Our primary notion is that public officials will respond to a growing, active, informed and determined constituency that wants fundamental changes in our drug policies and alternatives to prohibition.

ReconsiDer is a not-for-profit membership corporation chartered under the laws of New York State, and we are a federal non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. We have hundreds of members across New York State and elsewhere involved in drug policy reform. ReconsiDer, as of December 2000 has five chapters in New York: Albany, Binghamton, Syracuse, Ogdensburg and Hudson Valley. We anticipate new chapters in at least three more cities in the next six months. We hold candidates nights, appear frequently in the media, distribute a print periodical, (The ReconsiDer Quarterly), and produce a cable-cast TV show: Reconsider: Forum on Drug Policy. Through the most active speakers bureau of any reform organization in the country we make drug policy presentations and, finally, we maintain a substantial web site (www.reconsider.org) which receives over 8000 hits per month.

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131 Flint Path, Syracuse, NY 13219 (315) 488-3630 speakers@reconsider.org